

PRENATAL CARE

Description of Indicator

This indicator measures the percentage of live births in Orange County to women who began prenatal care during the first trimester. It also measures the percentage of live births to mothers who did not receive prenatal care until the third trimester or who received no prenatal care, compared to peer counties and the California state average.

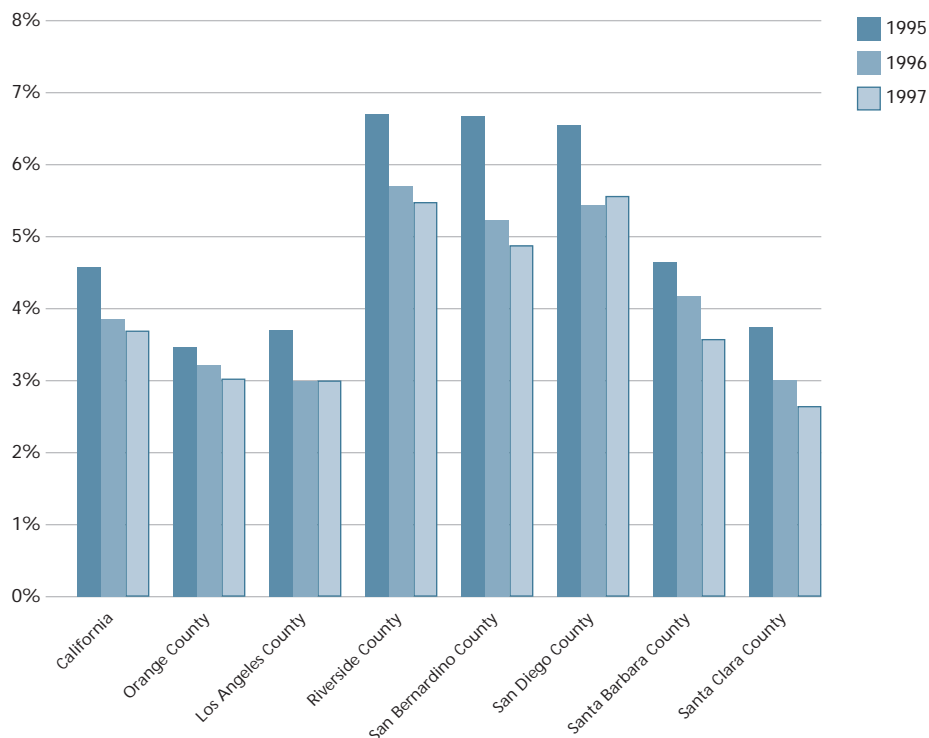
Why is it Important?

Early prenatal care provides an effective and cost-efficient way to prevent, detect and treat maternal and fetal medical problems. It provides an excellent opportunity for health care providers to offer counseling on healthy habits and lifestyles that lead to an optimal birth outcome. Higher levels of low birth weight and infant mortality are associated with late or no prenatal care.

How is Orange County Doing?

The percentage of women receiving early prenatal care has increased steadily over the past six years. Preliminary data for 1998 indicates that 85 percent of women giving birth in Orange County received prenatal care during the first trimester. Compared to the State average and most of our peer counties, Orange County women receive prenatal care earlier. In 1997, only 3 percent of Orange County women received late (third trimester) or no prenatal care, compared to 5.6 percent in San Diego County and 3.7 percent in the State overall. The sub-populations with the lowest percentage of early prenatal care were Latina mothers with 79.5% (1998) and teenage mothers with 69.7% (1997).

Percentage of Mothers Receiving Late or No Prenatal Care



Sources: California Department of Health Services, Office of Health Information and Research and Vital Statistics Section, 1999; (Late or No Prenatal Care Data) Advance Report, California Vital Records, 1997; County of Orange Health Care Agency, Research Center. November 1999